



The UK Habitat Classification

Habitat Definitions Version 1.1

UKHab

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This document is available for download from <http://ukhab.org>

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The Habitat Definitions should be read alongside other UKHab resources available for free download from the website quoted above, in particular the UK Habitat Classification workbook (xls format), the User Manual, the UKHab Field Key and recommended symbologies.

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Feedback is invited through the mechanisms identified on the website.

Section 1 – Primary Habitats



Figure 1 Primary Habitat r1a Eutrophic standing waters

g Grassland

Definition

Vegetation, not on waterlogged soils, with more than 75% cover of herbaceous species (grasses, sedges, rushes, herbs, forbs) with halophytic species absent or occasional.

Inclusions

Includes pastures and (semi-)natural grasslands not on waterlogged soils. Includes vegetation dominated by Bracken.

Exclusions

Excludes crops (see c), reedbeds (see f2e), calaminarian grasslands (see s1c), vegetation dominated by a combination of *Molinia* and *Juncus* species on waterlogged soils.

Position in the Classification

Primary

Level 2

Edition

Basic and Professional

More detailed categories available

28 subset categories

Categories at the next level

g1 g2 g3 g4

Status

Feature Type

Area

g2a Lowland calcareous grassland

Definition

Calcareous grasslands communities below the upper limits of agricultural enclosure.

Landscape and Ecological Context

Largely restricted to the warmer and drier climates of the southern and eastern areas of the United Kingdom.

Inclusions

Calcareous grassland on roadside verges. Calcareous grassland around Morecambe Bay in Cumbria.

Exclusions

Calcareous grassland in the unenclosed uplands (see g2b).
Calcareous grassland on the Pennines (see g2b).

Species

Indicators include Upright Brome *Bromopsis erecta*, Tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum*, Fairy Flax *Linum catharticum*, Salad Burnet *Sanguisorba minor ssp. minor*, Carline Thistle *Carlina vulgaris*, Stemless Thistle *Cirsium acaule*, Horseshoe Vetch *Hippocrepis comosa* and Squinancywort *Asperula cynanchica*, Dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris*, Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum*, Quaking Grass *Briza media*, Crested Hair-grass *Koeleria macrantha* and Common Rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium*.

Position in the Classification

Primary

Level 4

Edition

Basic and Professional

More detailed categories available

2 subset categories

Categories at the next level

g2a5 g2a6

Status

Priority Habitat

Feature Type

Area

g3c Other neutral grassland

Definition

Neutral grassland that does not meet the definition of either g3a or g3b. Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne* is likely to be present at <30% with between 9 and 15 further species (m2) also present. Many of the more species rich swards that were previously described as “semi-improved neutral grassland” will fall here, together with rank and unmanaged swards on neutral soils.

Landscape and Ecological Context

Extremely widespread in the UK lowlands.

Inclusions

Special note: many surveyors may wish to add detail to this category. Please consider using the relevant secondary codes: management (e.g. "78 - abandoned" or "80 - unmanaged" gives much information on the nature of the sward); environmental qualifiers (e.g. "117 - dry", "118 - mesic", "120 - wet", "123 - neutral grassland with calcicoles") and species features (e.g. "160 - sward type mosaic", "161 - tall or tussocky sward").

Exclusions

Species poor swards previously described as "semi-improved neutral grassland" (see g4).

Species

Grasses may include Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris*, False Oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris*, Crested Dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, Rough Meadow-grass *Poa trivialis* and Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*. Herbs may include Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*, White Clover *Trifolium repens*, Red Clover *Trifolium pratense*, Meadow Buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense* and Daisy *Bellis perennis*.

Position in the Classification

Primary

Level 4

Edition

Basic and Professional

More detailed categories available

4 subset categories

Categories at the next level

g3c5 g3c6 g3c7 g3c8

Status

Feature Type

Area

g3c5 Arrhenatherum neutral grassland

Definition

Neutral grassland with False Oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* dominant.

Landscape and Ecological Context

Lightly managed or unmanaged fields or road verges in lowland areas.

Species

This category is equivalent to NVC Community MG1. Total grass cover usually between 50 and 75% with abundant False Oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*. Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata* is also constant. Forbs up to 50% cover and associated with less fertile soil e.g. Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, Sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, Meadow Buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Self-heal *Prunella vulgaris*, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, Silverweed *Potentilla anserina*.

Position in the Classification

Primary

Level 5

Edition

Basic and Professional

More detailed categories available

0 subset categories

Categories at the next level

None

Status

Feature Type

Area

g3c6 *Lolium-Cynosurus* neutral grassland

Definition

Neutral grassland with a mixture of grass species, including palatable grasses such as Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne* and other grasses such as Crested Dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*.

Landscape and Ecological Context

One of the neutral grassland types typical of well-drained permanent pastures and meadows in lowland areas.

Species

This category is equivalent to NVC community MG6. Palatable grasses predominate, usually Rye Grasses *Lolium* spp., White Clover *Trifolium repens* and Timothy *Phleum pratense* 40% or below and other grasses more prominent such as Crested Dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris*, Yellow Oat Grass *Trisetum flavescens*, Soft-brome *Bromus hordeaceus* and Sweet Vernal Grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*. White Clover *Trifolium repens* and Common Mouse-eare *Cerastium fontanum* are constant forbs. Wetter situations may support abundant Soft Rush *Juncus effusus* or Hard Rush *Juncus inflexus*, Floating Sweet Grass *Glyceria fluitans*, Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and Rough Meadow Grass *Poa trivialis*. Total grass cover usually between 50 and 75%. Forbs up to 50% cover and associated with less fertile soil eg. Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, Sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, Meadow Buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Self-heal *Prunella vulgaris*, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, Silverweed *Potentilla anserina*, Meadow Thistle *Cirsium palustre* and Lady's-smock *Cardamine pratensis*.

Position in the Classification

Primary

Level 5

Edition

Basic and Professional

More detailed categories available

0 subset categories

Categories at the next level

None

Status

Feature Type

Area

g3c7 Deschampsia neutral grassland

Definition

Neutral grassland with Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus* and Tufted Hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* the dominant grass species.

Landscape and Ecological Context

One of the neutral grassland types typical of poorly-drained permanent pastures in lowland areas.

Species

This category is equivalent to NVC community MG9. Tufted Hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* and Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus* abundant. Rough Meadow-grass *Poa trivialis* and False Oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* may also be frequent.

Position in the Classification

Primary

Level 5

Edition

Basic and Professional

More detailed categories available

0 subset categories

Categories at the next level

None

Status

Feature Type

Area

g4 Modified grassland

Definition

Vegetation dominated by a few fast-growing grasses on fertile, neutral soils. It is frequently characterised by an abundance of Rye-grass *Lolium spp.* and White Clover *Trifolium repens*.

Species

Palatable grasses dominate mainly Rye grasses *Lolium spp.*, Timothy *Phleum pratense*, Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Crested Dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*. Grass cover usually over 75%. Broadleaved species restricted mainly to White Clover *Trifolium repens*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Greater Plantain *Plantago major*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, Broad-leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius* and Chickweed *Stellaria media*. Fertile but wetter situations may support occasional Soft Rush *Juncus effusus* or Hard Rush *Juncus inflexus*, Floating Sweet Grass *Glyceria fluitans*, Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and Rough Meadow-grass *Poa trivialis*, but accompanying species will always indicate high fertility. Species poor <9 species m⁻².

Position in the Classification

Primary

Level 3

Edition

Basic and Professional

More detailed categories available

0 subset categories

Categories at the next level

Status

Feature Type

Area